CODE SWITCHING IN ONLINE CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to describe code switching used by the BAELS senior students, especially the level and reasons for the occurrence of such phenomenon during online classroom discussion. Code switching is defined as the alteration of two languages within a single discourse, sentence, or constituent used by people who are bilingual and multilingual. To describe the level and reasons the researchers used descriptive-qualitative research design utilizing textual or corpus analysis in analyzing the data. The study was conducted among 21 BAELS senior students at Mindanao State University-Buug who were officially enrolled during the academic year 2021-2022. Questionnaire and corpus analysis was used to gather the necessary data for the realization of the study. The research findings of the study showed that there are three levels of code switching made by BAELS senior students (1) Intersentential code switching, (2) Intrasentential code switching, (3) Temporary lexical borrowing, among these three level intrasentential code switching with 22 or 59.46% is the highly used level of code switching with. And the students made code switching for (1) expression of solidarity, (2) ethnic identity maker, (3) changing of the topic, (4) to quote someone, (5) for affective functions, (6) to emphasize meaning. Expression of solidarity is the most prevalent reason for code switching with a SD of 0.48 and a mean of 2.7 which further means that switching when there is a change in the social situation such as a newcomer is what influences more for these students to code switch.

Keywords : code switching, online classroom, intersentential, intrasentential, temporary lexical borrowing.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Language teachers have typically been asked to keep languages strictly separate for delivering content and instructions and to discourage students from mixing their first and second languages according to Faltis and Valdés 2016. This traditional ideology of 'language purism' is where this long-standing practice is deeply rooted from wherein languages are seen as static 'codes' with well-defined boundaries and structures, and first-language exclusion is considered the ultimate means to achieve 'native-like' proficiency in the target language.

There are several factors that are involved when learning another language. Chloros (2009) posits that there are socio-linguistic factors that motivate learning and speaking a second language more especially in the context of bilingual or multilingual communities where there is an interplay between or among the first language (L1)

and/ or second language (L2) and the language to be learned. As Villanueva & Gamiao (2022) puts it, during the language learning process, the learner tends to stick to the rules of the L1 and may have difficulty in applying the rules of L2. Hence, there is a tendency of mixing languages in an utterance thereby committing switching of codes. The term code refers to speech varieties or dialects in a language or even languages. This is widely used in the field of linguistics, and it is always studied in a social context. Code is a signal used by the speaker to convey a message.

Code switching is the changing from one language variety to another when the situation demands (Richards, et al, 1985 as cited in Villanueva & Gamiao (2022). It is the alternating usage of two languages in a single stretch of conversation and it is usually done by a bilingual or multilingual speaker. Le Pichon-Vorstman et al. (2020) argued that in recent years, this pedagogical belief has changed. Code-switching, or general language mixing behaviour, has become

increasingly recognized as a natural product of multilingualism.

Researches have shown how code-switching offers many pedagogical benefits, including accelerating students' confidence, increasing their access to content, as well as improving their participation and engagement (Ahmad and Jusoff 2009; Carstens 2016; Daniel et al. 2019; Wang 2019). For Pennycook (2010), language is no longer commonly seen as a static entity but rather as a fluid resource in the whole meaning-making process.

Code switching is widely used in education, according to Filipino academics, and it has a good impact on learning results. According to Borlongan (2009), most English language teachers code-switch regularly in English-dominated classes, breaking the "English only" regulation. Furthermore, Asuncion (2010) discovered that switching to the mother tongue was the most common approach and claimed that code switching should not be viewed as incorrect or illegitimate because it aids learners in becoming communicatively effective bilingual members of society.

In Philippine classrooms, code switching is not just the preferred method of instruction; it has also been discovered to have functional aspects. According to Limoso (2002), code swapping in a literary classroom accomplishes several instructional goals while also facilitating cooperation and comprehension. Martin (2006) backs up the argument that code switching aids in the delivery of content knowledge in the classroom. Code swapping, according to Greggio and Gil (2007), can be a valuable method in improving English language teaching and learning. Code swapping, according to Bullock and Toribio (2009), covers linguistic gaps, expresses ethnic identity, and achieves certain discursive goals.

Teachers and students often employ code switching unconsciously; they may not be aware of it at the time of use, and it happens before they realize it. This conduct appears to be automatic during the in-class discourse, and it is unavoidable, according to Qing (2010). Nonetheless, code-switching fulfills several basic functions that may be advantageous in language learning situations, whether conscious or subconscious, unavoidable or not (Qing, 2010).

Li Wei (1998), a British-born Chinese in Tyneside, suggests the three levels of code switching. According to him, there are three levels of code switching that refer to the systematized position of language alternation in the turn-by-turn organized conversation. Code switching categorized into Level A is when one of the speakers, in an organized conversation of two people, switches into a different language in turn and is replied to by a different language as well. This level is considered as "Intersentential code switching". Level B is when a speaker uses two or more different languages in one talk/speech. This level is also considered as "Intrasentential code switching" (Poplack, 1980 in Li Wei, 1998). Level C is if a phrase, word, idiom, or expression is being said in a different language within a sentence. This level can be considered as a temporary lexical borrowing because the terms are hard to explain in a primary language (Li Wei, 1998). Hence, analysis of the three levels of code switching based on the conversation of English students on an online language communication is done in a similar context as Li Wei's three levels of code switching as it helps in analyzing excerpts from conversation that contain code switching.

Janet Holmes (2001) gives reasons of code switching which are the following: 1) Expression of solidarity - people sometimes code switched when there is a change in the social situation such as a newcomer to easier explain the switch that which reflects a change in the social situation and take positive account of the presence of a new participant. 2) Ethnic identity maker - when a speaker switches to another language as a sign of group membership. 3) Changing of the topic - if the switch reflects a change in other dimensions such as status relations between the people and the formality of their interaction. 4) To quote someone - if the switch concerns only the words that are derived from another speaker or quoting a proverb or a well-known saying in another language to give an impression of how important the proverb or the quotation in the speaker's speech. 5) For affective functions - when the code-switch of the speaker shows or expresses his or her feelings and emotions; 6) To emphasize meaning - if code switching is used to stress the meaning which has been said before by the speaker through reiterating or repeating them. Thus, reasons of code switching by English students were analyzed in a similar context as Janet Holmes' reasons of code switching as it does not only analyze the reason for code switching done by English students but does analyze any reasons of code switching committed by students also.

One of the prevailing reasons for the use of codeswitching appears to be the ability to enable greater access to content. This means that students would code switch because it helps them understand complicated or complex ideas in the other language. In a study by Carstens (2016), which studied the attitudes towards the effectiveness of translanguaging between English, Afrikaans and other South African languages in a classroom setting. The study is not set in an ESL context. However, results reveal two important points: (i) learners tended to switch back into their L1 to make sense of new concepts being introduced, and (ii) they were highly satisfied that they were able to develop more skills and confidence in their weaker language. This latter point is of particular importance, as it showed how—contrary to the traditional monolingual belief—learners' use of their L1 can in fact speed up their L2 progress, or at least their self-confidence in doing so.

There are also several other studies which have reported that students use code-switching for a better affective experience. For instance, being able to use their L1 in the classroom helps students better connect with their friends and teachers. Wang (2019), for example, investigated learners' perceptions of the code-switching pedagogy in Hong Kong, and he reported a predominantly positive view of code-switching, including the fact that code-switching enhanced the learner–teacher and learner–learner relationship. Similarly, Ahmad and Jusoff (2009) noted an increasing level of comfort felt among lower-level English students as soon as they were allowed to code-switch. Not only do students have positive attitudes towards code-switching in the classroom (e.g., Carstens 2016; Wang 2019), but they are also fonder of teachers adopting this approach (e.g., Fareed et al. 2016; Yao 2011).

Although it was found that both teachers and students use code switching for different benefits, there is still a mixed view from different stakeholders on the use of code switching in classroom

settings. Some see code switching as a natural process, while some doubt its use as it contradicts with the language purism ideology. Liu and Fang (2020) for instance cites that there are assumed and perceived dangers of the 'overuse' of the L1 on L2 progress while Wilson (2021) sees code-switching as much less of discourse mode, and the monolingual approach still 'lingers'.

Moreover, the worldwide pandemic wherein making learning possible was a challenge has added many complications in the teaching-learning scenario. Youtube videos, translation machines and online educational apps were developed and made available for learning to happen in the pandemic. Teachers and students alike were not yet fully able to keep up with the educational technological advancement. Also, educational technologies were still embracing monolingualism. The tools that are built for pedagogic purposes do so with a monolingual bias. Youtube videos, software and applications are still in pure language. This situation has made codeswitching as an effective alternative in amplifying English language teaching and learning process especially in this most challenging time as what Shartiely (2016) suggests, the implementation of code switching will facilitate learning in language classes.

Thus, undertaking this study adds to the existing literature on the nature of language learning particularly the use of codeswitching in online language classroom context. The study not only helps understand code switching abilities among multilingual learners, but it also expands our understanding on how code switching is utilized as a linguistic tool or scaffolding device in language learning.

This study was conducted to determine the use of code switching in online language classrooms of Mindanao State University-Buug Campus, school year 2021-2022. This study has two main objectives: 1. To identify the types of codeswitching students use in Online English Language Learning ;2. To understand the reasons for code-switching in an online English language learning setting.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive-qualitative research design utilizing transcribed recorded online classroom discussion. It is descriptive-qualitative as its aim was to determine the level as well as reasons of code switching evidenced from the transcribed conversation of virtual classrooms recorded through Google Meet.

This study was conducted in the virtual classes in Mindanao State University-Buug Campus, Datu Panas, Buug, Zamboanga Sibugay particularly in the English Department during the 1st semester of the academic year 2021-2022. The conduct of the research was during the height of the pandemic when classes were held online. Because of the pandemic caused by the virus COVID-19, Google meet has become the common platform where students and teachers exchange information and ideas in holding classes. As such, the study was done through the platform.

The BAELS classroom was considered due to accessibility with the researchers being members of the said classes. The researchers were most accessible to the senior BAELS' online classrooms. This study utilized a purposive sampling technique since the researchers have set some criteria in choosing the participants. Senior BAELS English classes were the target to secure the maximum level of formality in the classroom. There were two virtual classroom discussions recorded and transcribed. The first classroom was composed of __ senior students, the ELT class while ___ senior students were in the second classroom, the BPO class.

Actual virtual classroom conversations were recorded to properly document the code-switching acts committed by the students. The researchers then transcribed the recorded meeting. The said transcription was reviewed and validated by experts to confirm that no parts of the conversations were missed.

The researchers then reviewed and analyzed the transcribed data with the purpose of identifying and collecting the utterances with code switching, particularly sorting out from students' utterances that are with code switching. Then, the sorted utterances with code switching were categorized as intersentential, intrasentential and temporary lexical borrowing. Intersentential happens when one of the speakers, in an organized conversation of two people, switches into a different language in turn and is replied to by a different language as well. Intrasentential, is when a speaker uses two or more different languages in one talk/speech. Temporary lexical borrowing is if a phrase, word, idiom, or expression is being said in a different language within a sentence.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The discussion is based on the data gathered from the transcript of the actual virtual classes of BAELS senior students, during the first semester of Academic Year 2021-2022. Virtual discussions were analyzed by extracting excerpts where code switching occurs. The discussion is divided into the following areas.

i. Analysis of virtual discussion to determine the level of code switching prevalent among BAELS senior students.

ii. Reasons of code switching prevalent

The level of Code Switching

This study found out that there are three types of code switching made by BAELS senior students. The switch is demonstrated by students who were marked and categorized according to the different levels of code switching. After which, reasons for code switching are presented.

Table 1 Students' Utterances Table

Utterances	Frequency	Percent
With CS	37	40.22%
Without CS	55	59.78%
Total	92	100%

Table 1 presents the BAELS senior students' utterances, it shows that during the online class there is a total of 92 or 100% utterances from the students. It reveals that out of this figure, 37 or 40.22% of their utterances are with code switching while 55 or 59.78% are without code switching. This implies that the majority of the students converse

with plain straight English which is the medium of instruction for BAELS classroom. Moreover, there is still a good number of utterances with code switching.

Table 2 The Level of Code Switching Occurred by BAELS Senior Students

Students	Level of Code Switching			Total
Intersentential code switching	Intrasentential code switching	Temporary lexical borrowing		
92	1	22	14	37
Percent	2.07%	59.46%	37.84%	100%

Table 2 showcases the level of code switching among BAELS senior students. It shows that the majority (22 or 59.46%) of the code-switched utterances are intrasentential, few (14 or 37.84%) is temporary lexical borrowing and least (1 or 2.07%) is intrersentential code switching. This further implies that intrasentetial code switching is the most highly used type or level of code switching among BAELS senior students.

a. Intersentential code switching

Intersentential code switching refers to the alteration in a single discourse between two languages, where the switching occurs after a sentence in the first language has been completed and the next sentence starts a new language {e.g. Appel & Muysken 1987:118}. In an utterance by one of the students, shifting of the language from straight English to another language is evident in the excerpt that follows. One thing noticeable is the language the student shifted to which is shifting into two different languages, Filipino and Cebuano.

*"…Hello ma'am, how does common sense differ from research ma'am? I think common sense is just, it is just based on your own understanding on how you foresee things which came along or that affected or related to what you understand to a particular situation or event or something like that, while research it undergoes a certain study. There has to be a ground or a supporting details, or like there has to be proof on the knowledge that you have gathered while common sense is just. **Kanang. Parang yung common sense yung sarili mong … kana bitawng kuan ma'am kanang …yung sarili mong pagkakaintindi common sense, yung ganon.** While research like as what you have said earlier ma'am it undergoes empirical data, there has to be supporting or evidence like that ma'am."[70]*

In the excerpt, there is shifting from English into two more languages – Filipino and Cebuano however, Cebuano is not a standard language that should be used in school as stated in Department Order No. 52, series of 1987 which ordered the use of Filipino and English as the medium of instruction at all levels and where students are expected to possess skills in English so as seen from the example above the student in her first switching used Cebuano however, she stopped and replaced it with Filipino knowing that it is not the right thing do but then the pauses marks hesitation to continue the language she shifted to this means that this student is not comfortable using it. Nevertheless, even with pauses she continued with what is standard language – Filipino and English.

b. Intrasentential code switching

Intrasentential code switching involves a speaker who uses two or more different languages in one talk/speech (Poplack, 1980 in Li Wei,

1998). A shift done in the middle of a sentence, with no interruptions, hesitations, or pauses to indicate a shift. Examples of intrasentential code switching are shown in utterance 6, 20, 24, 32, 58, 38 and 75 below for further reference.

"…First ma'am kulba kayo pero karun nawala-wala ng kakulba ma'am. Free na kaayo mi ma'am sa edit napud sunod ma'am.[6]
"…Ma'am, wala pa pud ko kabuhat ma'am, kay nag-focus sa thesis atung last time ma'am. Karun ma'am magbuhat ko, sorry ma'am."[20]

"…Ma'am katung letter diay sa request ma'am, pag gikan to siya sa instructor sa certain subject ma'am, request pa ang tawag ato ma'am? tas pag na-forward na siya sa katung kuan ma'am mao na siya ang endorsement?[24]

"…Yes ma'am, okay na ma'am."[32]
"…Ma'am, ang special order?[52]
"…Ma'am this afternoon ra ma'am?[38]

" …Okay ma'am, as what I have said ma'am common sense ma'am it is widely known facts or things, general public have that idea when it comes to research ma am the reason why we conduct research it's because we haven't come up with a certain conclusion yet so if we are able to conduct that particular study then we can prove that a particular thing or certain matter, that is true or not so, common sense ma'am it is widely known yet ang research ma'am not yet known so we need to conduct the study for it to be known, that's the difference ma'am.[75]

In the second excerpt, students used two languages in committing code switching within sentences, these are English and Cebuano language which means that majority of the students are Bisaya. They commonly start with the English language in their utterances and shift to Cebuano then back to the language they first shifted to. The majority of the switch appears in the middle of the student's utterances.

In the first, second and third example, the code switching committed is commonly phrasal, sequence of two or more words arranged in a grammatical construction and acting as a unit in a sentence and as seen above it commonly appears more than three times. Students when expressing their feeling or emotions often switched back and forth to the language they first shifted to and to what is comfortable for them also, when they are speaking without organizing their thoughts first, it commonly results to shifting as evident in the third example, "na siya sa katung kuan" this phrase signifies something unidentified which means that the student speaks before she could have organized her thoughts. The longer the utterance the more frequent code switching occurs so in the following examples minimal switched is being shown within the sentence, you can also notice that it appears when the students are asking the teacher to facilitate their learning or to clarify something because when you are asking commonly, one sentence is enough and you already have it in mind even before the teacher ask you to raise it meaning it is already organized. However, in the last example the case is different, students use straight English and commit very minimal switching which means that some of the students can speak straight English without pauses and hesitation.

c. Temporary lexical borrowing

Temporary lexical borrowing involves a phrase, word, idiom, or expression being said in a different language within a sentence. This

level can be considered as a temporary lexical borrowing because the terms are hard to explain in a primary language (Li Wei, 1998). Examples of temporary lexical borrowing are shown in utterance 4, 16, 49, 46 and 50 below.

"...Nangita pa daw silag signal ma'am."[4]

"...Ma'am nag send ko sa GC (group chat) ay sa classroom ma'am."[16]

"Oo ma'am kita mi sa post sa fb page."[49]

"...Katong sa memorandum ma'am?"[46]

"...Ma'am kanus-a gamiton ang memorandum and the special order ma'am?"[50]

In the last excerpt, students used Cebuano language in their speech while borrowing words or terms that don't have an equivalent in the local language. Words that are commonly borrowed are more on technological terms as seen in the first three examples above. The word signal, send, GC (group chat), post, fb page are terminologies referring to or commonly used words upon using or engaging into any online platform however not limited to only this sort. Classroom on the one hand does not refer to the traditional classroom that we know, the one that has a physical entity keeping students in one place for any educational purposes. What the student means in this utterance is a mobile application used for students and teachers' interaction online. Technical terms are common too, especially when it comes to the contents of the subject being discussed. For instance, memorandum and special order, these words have no equivalent in the language that the students use in their utterance which is the Cebuano so as being shown by the last two examples above technical terms defined as a word that has a specific meaning within a specific field of expertise is used.

Reasons of Code Switching

This section answers the second question - what reasons for code-switching are prevailing in the language students' online classroom? There are six reasons that influenced language students as categorized by the researchers guided by Janet Holmes (2001) reasons for code switching.

Table 3 Students Code Switching Utterances

Students	Frequency	Percent
Committed CS	10	58.82%
No CS committed	7	41.18%
Total	17	100%

Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage of students' code-switching utterance. It shows that committed code switching is 10 or 58.82% out of 17 or 100% and 7 or 41.18% of the utterance is without code switching. It implies that the majority of the students did not use straight English language in speaking and that they code switched more often than not. This result is also evident in the findings of the research entitled "The Role of Code Switching as a Communicative Tool in an ESL Teacher Education Classroom" by Nik Mastura, Nik Ismail Azlan and Suthagar Narasuman which revealed that students code switched in almost every sentence they spoke, including during formal class presentation when they were being assessed.

Table 4 Frequency of Code Switching Reasons

Reasons of code switching	Always	Sometimes	SD	Mean	Interpretation
a. Expression of solidarity	7	3	0.48	2.7	Always
b. Ethnic identity maker	5	5	0.52	2.4	Always
c. Changing of the topic	5	5	0.53	2.5	Always
d. To quote someone	5	5	0.52	2.4	Always
e. For affective function	7	3	0.52	2.6	Always
f. Emphasis meaning	5	5	0.53	2.5	Always
		Total	0.51	2.52	Always

Legend: Always -range score of 2.4 to 3.0.
Sometimes - range score of 1.7 to 2.3.
Never - range score of 1 to 1.6

Table 4 above illustrates the reasons that influence students to code switch. Expression of Solidarity, Ethnic Identity Maker, changing of the topic, to quote someone, for affective function; and to Emphasis meaning are the reasons for code switching and among these six reasons, Expression of Solidarity with a SD of 0.48 and a mean of 2.7 ranks the highest while Ethnic Identity Maker and to quote someone with the same SD of 0.52 and a mean of 2.4 rank the lowest. Thus, Expression of Solidarity is the most prevalent reason for code switching in the BAELS senior students' online classroom which further means that switching when there is a change in the social situation such as a newcomer is what influences more for these students to code switch. Bullock and Toribio (2009) also claim that code switching fills linguistic gaps, expresses ethnic identity, and achieves particular discursive aims.

4. **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that code switching occurs in online language classrooms for different levels and for different reasons. Intrasentential is the highly used level of code switching and the most prevalent reason for code switching is expression of solidarity. This means that students are competent enough to switch using two or even more languages in communicating in their classrooms in order to be understood clearly. This is another manifestation of the BAELS students in MSU Buug as multilinguals individuals.

Code-switching aids learners to be understood, especially on difficult aspects of the lesson as well as enables them to participate in lessons. Allowing code switching as a bridge between familiar and unfamiliar

vocabulary could be helping students get more comfortable conversing spontaneously.

Teachers should be aware that code switching occurs in different levels and reasons as it used to. Code Switching indeed is beneficial for the students for they can adopt the language right away, grasp the concept of a lesson, thus, it serves as a foundation of students learning. However, ELT teachers should serve as a model in molding the students in learning and mastering the language. Then, all this leads back to the theory of exercise, that learning the language can be best acquired through using it. ELT teachers should find remedial actions so that students get to practice using the language without code switching- that is making students be comfortable with the language.

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